

# The Government Performance Project

*Presentation for the  
Transportation Research Board  
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## Original goals of the project

- To inform the public about the elements of good government management
- To enable governments to learn from one another
- To recognize change and improvement over time
- To enhance citizen understanding of government management

## Original plan

- Assessment of management capacity:
  - States (1999, 2001)
  - Cities (2000)
  - Counties (2002)
  - Federal agencies (1999 – 2002)
- Collaboration between journalists at *Governing magazine* and academics at the Maxwell School
- Results published in *Governing magazine*

## Approach

- Criteria-driven model – conditions against which performance can be measured
- Triangulated data collection scheme
  - Documentary analysis
  - Mail survey
  - Telephone interviews

## The result

- Four issues of *Governing* magazine featuring in-depth analysis of government performance
- Wide press pickup – print, audio, video – for each issue
- In states, progress forward
  - 24 states average grade increased
  - 16 states average grade unchanged

## Mixed Reaction

- No one likes to be graded

BUT

- Many states appreciated the systematic evaluation of their systems

## Now...Grading the States

- Virtual university made up of the best academics, wherever they are
- Still a collaboration between journalists at *Governing* and academic community
- Grading areas have been reduced from five to four
- Next set of grades will be released in February 2005 issue of *Governing*
- States will be unit of analysis

## Evaluation Areas

We will look at how states manage:

Money  
People  
Infrastructure  
Information

## Transparency

- Criteria clearly spelled out at the beginning of data gathering
- Grading reports will clearly describe justification for grades given
- Expanded web presence will provide richer background on noteworthy state practices and policies

## Infrastructure

- Criteria under development as we speak
- Feedback welcome

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